



NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: IMMEDIATE
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April 14, 2004

Public Comments Sought on Beltway HOT Lanes Proposal

Comment Session is April 29

The I-495 Public Private Transportation advisory panel will hear public comments about the private proposal to construct HOT (high occupancy toll) lanes on a 14-mile segment of the Capital Beltway at a public meeting on April 29.

The comments will help the panel in its review of the proposal and recommendation to Transportation Secretary Whitt Clement and VDOT Commissioner Philip Shucet. The panel is expected to hold a final meeting and make its recommendation by the end of May.

The meeting will be held at the Fairview Park Marriott in Falls Church. The advisory panel will conduct an open work session beginning at 6 p.m. An overview of the HOT lane proposal will be presented at 7 p.m. and public comments will begin at 7:30 p.m. Citizens and elected officials will have three minutes to speak in the order in which they signed up at the door. Groups are encouraged to designate a spokesperson to speak on their behalf and will have six minutes to provide comments. There is no pre-registration to speak.

The construction firm Fluor Daniel submitted the HOT lanes proposal under the Public Private Transportation Act. Fluor Daniel proposes to build two HOT lanes in each direction from north of the Springfield Interchange to north of the Dulles Toll Road. According to the proposal, HOT lanes would be free to carpoolers, buses and emergency vehicles; cars carrying only one or two people would pay a variable toll to use the lanes. Large trucks would not be allowed to use HOT lanes.

The panel includes representation from the Commonwealth Transportation Board, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, the Metropolitan Washington Transportation Planning Board, Fairfax County, and the academic community.

No improvements can be made to the beltway unless they are part of a federally approved environmental impact study. An independent environmental review of possible improvements to the Capital Beltway is also under way. In 2002, VDOT held public hearings on three alternatives to add HOV lanes and make improvements to each of the 10 interchanges between the Springfield Interchange and the American Legion Bridge. More than 900 citizens attended the hearings and 1,800 comments were received. Based on the large number of comments received regarding the physical impacts of the proposed improvements, VDOT has evaluated modifications to reduce the size of the project, particularly at each of the ten interchanges. In addition, the effectiveness of HOT lanes is being evaluated for each of the alternatives. Results of these additional evaluations will be presented at public workshops scheduled for June 29 and 30.

I-495 Advisory Panel:

Pierce Homer, Chair and Deputy Secretary of Transportation
Julia Connally, member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board
Kenneth Klinge, member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board
Gerald McCarthy, member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board
Leonard "Hobie" Mitchel, member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board
Malcolm Kerley, P.E., VDOT Chief Engineer of Program Development
Barbara Reese, VDOT Chief Financial Officer
Tom Farley, VDOT Northern Virginia District Administrator
Dr. Lester Hoel, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Virginia
Ron Kirby, Director, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Young Ho Chang, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Charles Badger, Assistant Director, Department of Rail and Public Transportation

For more information on the I-495 HOT lane proposal and the PPTA process, go to:
<http://virginiadot.org/business/ppta-default.asp>

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Directions: Fairview Park Marriott, 3111 Fairview Park Drive South, Falls Church. From the Capital Beltway take Route 50 east (Exit 50) and follow signs to Fairview Park South. Hotel is on the left.

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